

TRAILS

KEY ISSUES

1. The majority of existing trails are in the less densely populated eastern half of the county. Additional trails are needed closer to population centers in the western portion of the county so more residents have convenient access and can enjoy the recreation, health and transportation benefits of trails. These local trails should be developed with community involvement and be formalized outside of the General Plan within an adopted Community Trails Master Plan.
2. Adequate funding, management and maintenance of trails should be established in order to provide an effective and enjoyable trail system that meets public needs and expectations.
3. Trail planning efforts should include focused attention on new trail opportunities within park lands, open space preserves, and lands in the Multiple Species Conservation Program, where appropriate and consistent with habitat protection.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1: **Provide a system of “non-motorized trails” (trails) that meets the needs of County residents by providing scenic and enjoyable experiences that include connections with parks, public open spaces, trail systems of other jurisdictions, points of interest, and/or sites with educational or historical significance.**

Policy 1-1: Continue to provide and expand the variety of trail experiences, including urban/suburban, rural, wilderness, multi-use and single use, staging areas and support facilities.

Policy 1-2: Encourage trail routes that highlight the County’s recreational and educational resources, including natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources whenever possible.

Policy 1-3: Provide a variety of linear distances for users to experience such as trails that offer long distance experiences and connect with other trail systems, points of interest or transit facilities; and trails that offer short distance and loop experiences.

Goal 2: **Initiate and sustain an effective and efficient trail system, using the *Regional Trail Plan* contained within this General Plan and a *Community Trails Master Plan* as the basis for future planning, coordination, implementation, and management of the trail system.**

Policy 2-1: Prioritize trail segments, and their development and acquisition in a manner that provides maximum public benefit given available public and private resources.

Policy 2-2: Coordinate trail planning, acquisition, development, and management with appropriate jurisdictions.

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- Policy 2-3: Participate in completing missing segments of Regional trails to satisfy the need for long-range trail opportunities.
- Policy 2-4: Consider long-range “connectivity” as a principal planning element for Regional trails.
- Policy 2-5: Encourage development of a *Community Trails Master Plan* to define community goals, policies, and implementation criteria.
- Policy 2-6: Consider a population-oriented numerical level of service as a principal planning element for community trails and for quantifying future community trail needs but consider other community related factors as well.
- Policy 2-7: Pathways should be considered when critical connections to staging areas or trail systems cannot use a conventional trail and be routed along scenic roads where such routing is feasible.

Goal 3: Consider both public and private lands for trail implementation.

- Policy 3-1: Seek opportunities to designate or construct future trails on County-owned lands, such as parks, open space preserves and/or lands within the MSCP or other lands already under public ownership or proposed for public acquisition.
- Policy 3-2: Trail opportunities on public lands and public easements should be a priority over those crossing privately owned lands.
- Policy 3-3: Seek trail opportunities through easements, dedications, license agreements, or joint-use agreements with public and semi-public agencies including utility districts, school districts, water districts, transportation agencies, and parks and open space agencies.
- Policy 3-4: Secure trail routes across private lands through purchase, easements, and dedication or by other means from a willing property owner/seller.
- Policy 3-5: Identify trail routes that meet a public need while recognizing the concerns of private property owners, safety requirements, land use concerns and environmental protection goals.
- Policy 3-6: Development projects and other discretionary projects proposed on lands upon which a trail or pathway in the *Regional Trail Plan* or *Community Trails Master Plan* has been identified may be required to dedicate and improve land for trail or pathway purposes where a nexus between the impacts of the proposed development and the dedication/improvement requirement exists.
- Policy 3-7: Seek to establish funding opportunities for trail acquisition, implementation, maintenance and operation.

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- Policy 3-8: Seek methods of offering incentives to private land owners that will encourage the voluntary dedication of trail easements and/or gifts of land for trails.
- Goal 4: Strive to manage, operate and maintain trails so that proper use is encouraged, and user safety, resource conditions, the environment, and adjacent land uses are not compromised.**
- Policy 4-1: Coordinate the operations and maintenance of pathways with similar activities for the adjacent roads and road rights-of-way.
- Policy 4-2: Public improvement projects, such as road widening, bridge construction, and flood control projects, which may impact trails or pathways in the *Regional Trail Plan* or *Community Trails Master Plan* should incorporate such facilities in project design and construction.
- Policy 4-3: Encourage the involvement and input of the agricultural community in matters relating to trails on or adjacent to agricultural lands and place a priority on the protection of agricultural.
- Policy 4-4: Pursue mechanisms for securing trail routes across agricultural and grazing lands from willing property owners that are fair and reasonable such as purchase, easements negotiated through incentives, or license agreements.
- Policy 4-5: Establish specific guidelines for trails in areas with active agricultural operations or active grazing lands that will minimize potential impacts and accommodate operational necessities through proper location, design, construction, and active management.
- Policy 4-6: During trail design on or adjacent to agricultural land, notify and coordinate with the affected land owners to consider any special features that may be needed.
- Policy 4-7: When locating specific trail segments, prioritize locations that avoid significant impacts to sensitive environmental resources.
- Policy 4-8: Establish and designate trails, whenever feasible, that correspond to existing (non-designated) trails, paths, or roads that already have a disturbed tread.
- Policy 4-9: Trails should be closed when conditions become unsafe or environmental resources are severely impacted. Such conditions could include soil erosion, flooding, fire hazard, environmental damage, or failure to follow an outlined management plan.